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RUEHCD/AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ 0025  
RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 5761  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/17/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [NI](#) [ELECTIONS](#)  
SUBJECT: PDP PRIMARY: YAR'ADUA / JONATHAN TICKET

REF: A. ABUJA 3216  
[B. ABUJA 3186](#)  
[C. ABUJA 3182](#)

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Thomas Furey for Reasons 1.4 (b and d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. The December 17 announcement of the landslide victory of Obasanjo's pick as presidential candidate, Umaru Yar'Adua, in the PDP convention seemed inevitable; however, Yar'Adua's announcement on December 18 of Bayelsa Governor Goodluck Jonathan, who has never declared aspirations to the villa, as his running mate was generally unexpected. In his acceptance speech, Yar'Adua pledged to continue the economic reform program begun by Obasanjo, stressing the need to continue to fight corruption and demand good governance. Convention delegates also passed amendments to the PDP Convention which require the Chairman to be a formerly elected president from the PDP Party -- thereby guaranteeing the chairmanship to Obasanjo. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) The December 16 PDP convention was quiet -- delegates seemed resolved from the outset to the inevitability of Yar'Adua's nomination. As of the start of the convention, the field of 19 candidates who had successfully passed the party's screening exercise and remained in the race as of December 15 (Ref. A) had narrowed to only twelve candidates. Speculation was circulating during the convention that Rivers Governor Peter Odili and Cross Rivers Governor Donald Duke may have withdrawn their candidacy in hopes of being selected as the vice presidential running mate.

[1](#)3. (C) Yar'Adua's inevitable selection was obvious upon entering the Eagle Square venue. Yar'Adua's campaign posters along the inside of the front fence and mini blimps around the perimeter were the only campaign materials within the arena which were visible to all. Pol Counselor found a couple of other posters out of line-of-sight of the crowds along the side of the bleachers. Mrs. Sarah Jibril asked that each of the candidates be allowed to address the delegates before the elections, but was told to sit down and be quiet. Seemingly resolved to the outcome, the overwhelming majority of delegates left, some before voting and most just after, despite the need for a run-off vote if no candidate received more than fifty percent of the delegate votes.

[1](#)43. (U) Final vote counts were as follows: Yar'Adua - 3,024, Rochas - 372, Gusau - 271, Gana - 165, Marwa - 127, Ukiwe - 17, Akhigbe - 13, Horsefall - 8, Jibril - 4, Sawa - 3, Uwechue - 3, and Kontagora - 0. Ninety-four votes were invalid.

¶5. (C) Prior to the election of a candidate, delegates voted to adopt amendments to the party constitution which would require the party be chaired by an elected former president originating within the party (successfully guaranteeing the chairmanship to Obasanjo as the only individual fitting that description). The vote was taken by voice vote, with the unenthusiastic and hardly resounding "aye" vote announced as successful without ever asking for a "nay" vote.

¶6. (C) COMMENT: While the selection of Yar'Adua was a foregone conclusion, the Yar'Adua/Jonathan ticket presents unique difficulties for the PDP. Yar'Adua has almost no support base throughout the north and rumors of his history of mental health will alienate most Nigerians. While he shares a name with his famous elder brother, that will not entice many Northerners to back him. As well, his political history has been at odds with that of his brother and Vice President Atiku Abubakar and he is unlikely to pick up significant support among Atiku's People's Democratic Movement (PDM) political machine (Ref. C). Jonathan brings his own difficulties to the table. While he has some respect among some Ijaws, the support of largely discredited Ijaw elders such as E.K. Clark will not go far in bringing the ongoing youth violence under control or ensuring support of the militant activists either in his own state or throughout the region. Post will relay further analysis of the ticket and biographical information septel. END COMMENT.  
FUREY